

REMARKS

Applicant has amended this application as instructed by the examiner. Notably, the “optional” language that the examiner finds to be indefinite is not indefinite at all. It is clear from the language and specification that the claim language does not recite any additional structure beyond the one configurable segment. Instead, the language merely limits what the configurable segment is. That is, the claim is clear that the other “configurable segments” that were not selected are not part of the claimed subject matter. The configurable segment that is claimed was selected from one of several. Reconsideration of the objection is requested

The claims stand allowable over the prior art.

First, the objection of the claims over the patent to Smith should be withdrawn. The examiner is arguing that the portion 55 of the Smith reference is the “male” component and the portion 52 is the “female” component. While an examiner is allowed to broadly interpret claims, certainly the meaning of a male/female connection is well enough known that the complete reversal argued here by the examiner cannot be proper. Element 55 is outside element 52. Simply, the rejection of the claims over Smith must be withdrawn.

What remains is the rejection of the claims over Mangas, et al. Mangas, et al. discloses an enlarged portion that receives a seal 124. However, this enlarged portion is not part of the “stem” as claimed. The claimed stem must be the portion that is movable within the receptacle member. The portion that receives the seal 124 on Mangas, et al. is thus not a “stem.” The rejection of the claims over Mangas, et al. should be withdrawn.

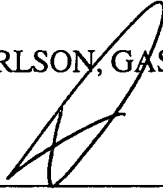
Notably, the rejection of claims 16-18 was only over the Smith reference, and thus those claims are allowable even if the examiner insists on maintaining the rejection over Mangas, et al.

An indication of allowability of all claims is in order.

In addition, applicant is submitting a substitute specification and replacement drawings. No new matter has been added to the substitute specification. Entry of the substitute specification and drawings is requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.

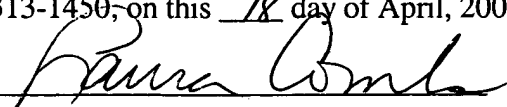


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CERTIFICATE OF MAIL

I hereby certify that the enclosed Response is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 18 day of April, 2005



Laura Combs